



IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COACHING TASK FORCE

SPORTS COACHING IN THE UK

BRIEFING NOTE—JANUARY 2004



Introduction

sports coach UK (scUK) has recently commissioned the independent research agency MORI to undertake a large-scale survey of sports coaching in the UK. This responds to the widespread acknowledgement that the evidence base underpinning coaching policy and delivery in the UK is patchy and inconsistent. It will also provide baseline data to evaluate the impact of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) £28m Coaching project, which is implementing the key recommendations of the Coaching Task Force.

Research aims

The research workstrand has three basic aims:

- to collate for the first time existing information on the state of coaching in the UK and identify any gaps and/or difficulties in capturing and collating such information;
- to establish baseline data against which the impact of the Coaching project can be judged; and
- to identify any common themes to inform future policy development, strategic interventions and investment.

Core data requirements

The research workstrand is collecting data in the following core areas:

- the number of qualified coaches in the UK;
- the number of active coaches within individual sports, their educational background, their qualifications and the ratio of active coaches to the membership of that sport;
- the proportion of coaches from different groups (i.e. sport, region, gender, ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic background);
- the number of coaches following managed plans for continuous professional development (CPD);
- the number of coaches active in full- and part-time employment and in unpaid coaching roles;
- the number of full- and part-time coaches working at higher and local levels;
- the number of school teachers with coaching qualifications and the number involved in coaching in schools;

- the number of coaches who are not qualified teachers but are involved in coaching in schools;
- the number of coaches working for local authorities, rates of pay, CPD/support and hours worked;
- the experience of unpaid coaches working in clubs in relation to their sense of value and CPD/support;
- length of involvement as an active coach, motivations for becoming a coach and what would encourage individuals to both continue to coach and seek further coaching qualifications and/or development opportunities;
- why people enter into coaching, how more people might be encouraged to become coaches, barriers preventing greater take-up of coaching qualifications and/or other development opportunities and interest among unpaid coaches in taking up a paid coaching career (both full and/or significant part time);
- how current bodies involved in supporting coaching are viewed and what the public perceives as important elements of coaching provision;
- reasons for leaving coaching and whether concerns about potential liability and litigation are significant factors; and
- attitudes to whether coaches should be licensed and/or regulated in addition to their coaching qualifications and whether licensing and/or regulation should be undertaken by the appropriate governing body or an independent agency.

The aim is to ensure that as many as possible of these core data requirements can be analysed by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sport, country and, where appropriate, region.

Research method

scUK and MORI have agreed the following four-stage methodology.

- **Stage one: desk research.** Identifying, examining and reviewing articles, research, documentation, Internet resources and other current information from sports-administration agencies, governing bodies and relevant others on coaching in the UK. This stage will look in detail at how the governing bodies of the 31 focus sports¹ for the Coaching project collect and use information on coaching and coaching systems. This will provide an essential insight into the current state of coaching-information collection in the UK as well as useful information for other stages of the research (e.g. stage four on sports clubs). It will also provide recommendations on what coaching data should be collected, the methods used to collect data and the format in which they should be stored.
- **Stage two: qualitative research.** 100 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with self-employed coaches, PE teachers (both with and without formal coaching qualifications), employed coaches (e.g. by local authorities and elite clubs), volunteer

¹ Angling, archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, bowls, canoeing, cricket, cycling, equestrian, football, golf, gymnastics, hockey, judo, karate, mountaineering, movement/dance, netball, orienteering, rounders, rowing, rugby league, rugby union, sailing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis, triathlon and volleyball.

coaches and governing bodies. The interviews will be spread across the home countries and English regions and at different levels of coaching (e.g. grass roots and elite) and commitment (e.g. full and part time). This stage will provide valuable, detailed insights into the experiences and opinions of these key actors, contributing to greater understanding of the language and structures of coaching systems.

- **Stage three: omnibus research.** Interviews with a minimum of 2,000 members of the general public using MORI's omnibus survey. This will be repeated over four different waves to build up a higher representation of those members of the public who have experience of coaching. This stage will provide a macro perspective on the numbers of individuals involved in coaching and how many have qualifications as well as some basic attitudinal data. The data from this stage will be triangulated with those on coaching from governing bodies in stage one to build up a more detailed profile of coaching in the UK.
- **Stage four: further quantitative research.** Telephone and self-administered postal surveys with sports clubs, local-authority representatives, teachers and higher-education institutions. This stage will fill in some of the gaps on the extent of coaching activity, again building up a more detailed picture of coaching and coaching systems in the UK.

Timetable

The research workstrand is working to the following basic timetable.

- **October 2003.** Stages 1 and 2 set up.
- **December 2003.** Stages 3 and 4 set up.
- **January 2004.** Stage 2 complete.
- **February 2004.** Stages 1, 3 and 4 complete.
- **March 2004.** Final report.

Management arrangements

The research workstrand is being undertaken by MORI Sports Research Unit; key contacts include Peter Hasler and Simon Duke. Day-to-day management is being undertaken by Julian North, Research Manager at scUK.

The workstrand is being steered by a subdelivery group comprising representatives from scUK, DCMS, UK Sport, the home-country sports councils, SkillsActive and equity partners. It reports to the Coaching project delivery board chaired by DCMS.

For more information about the research workstrand, please contact:

Julian North
Research Manager
sports coach UK, 114 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 3BJ
jnorth@sportscoachuk.org